

**Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Friday, July 27, 2018
Conference Call
10:00 a.m. – Noon
DRAFT MINUTES**

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Present cont'd	Staff
Kathleen Bush	Mark Werner	Gwenn Eyer
Alice Couch	Jeremy Wheeler	Sylvia Fonseca
Keely Giles	Julie Yelverton	Vanessa James
Natalie Miller		Kelly King
Maria Nanos	AAC Members Absent	Gail Mayer
Maripat Oliver	Michelle Price	Maggie Poteau
Anne O'Malley	Crystal Rekart	
Elizabeth Richmond	Keisha Robinson	Guests
Danielle Sanders	Danny Tolliver Jr.	Bryan Curiel
Brittney Sprouse	Amy Trotter	Christine Feldman
Karen Taylor	Karen Wardlaw	

Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC co-chair, opened the call. She introduced Bryan Curiel, the first speaker.

Fostering Families Today

Bryan Curiel

Bryan explained that his company, Fostering Media Connections, a 501c3, is working with DCFS communications to collaborate on sharing information with Illinois caregivers. Fostering Families Today is a 65-page publication with content directed toward foster and adoptive parents, kin caregivers and guardians. Subscribership has increased by 400% since Fostering Media Connections acquired it, due in part to the availability of additional resources. The magazine publisher allows larger agencies to add their own newsletter to the magazine. Bryan stated that he was impressed with Illinois Families Now & Forever, noting that it's a very valuable resource. He stated that combining the two will allow more space in the Illinois newsletter to focus on more Illinois-specific issues and allow the magazine the opportunity to do the job of educating foster/adoptive parents about the day-to-day challenges in Illinois.

Bryan has worked with Vanessa and others to move this forward. Vanessa stated that Bryan initially contacted her approximately six months ago, but no action was taken at that time. She noted that the magazine is very relevant to the foster care experience and the proposed collaboration with DCFS Communications allows them to use content that applies to most caregivers, then hone in on Illinois-specific programs and resources. Bryan will send a .pdf of the most recent magazine to be distributed to council members. Vanessa stated the DCFS management is looking into ways to make this collaboration work. She said that we have the potential to put Illinois Families Now & Forever front and center, maintaining our own identity. After meeting with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and discussing the perceived

value and what foster parents might be willing to pay, Vanessa said that the state is considering how they could subsidize the cost, recognizing that it will offset current expenses of printing and mailing. They will collaborate to the degree that the DCFS point person can review upcoming content and address Illinois-specific strategies or programs that are closely related to the content. Vanessa stated that the expectation of collaboration is there and both sides could be working on the same topics at the same time.

Discussion

- Will we be able to post waiting children in the national magazine? Vanessa said that we could do a more thorough job of working with the adoption listing service because they would have pages that are not currently available to list more children and more details.
- Vanessa noted that there is a training quiz that could possibly feed into the VTC for training credit.
- Fostering Media Connections offers youth programs: Youth Voice shows a commitment to including the stories of those who have lived the experience of foster care through contributions to regular columns, writing and photo contests, internships and writing workshops. Foster Youth Questival is an annual event in which a group of climbers consisting of former foster youth, foster youth advocates and professionals climb Mt. Shasta, one of the highest peaks in California.
- There are Special Editions including Fostering Faith, a foster/adoptive resource for the faith-based community; Healing Matters, a national resource on developmental trauma; Kids on the Hill explores key issues on child welfare policy and KinCare Today, a national resource for families raising kin.
- Anne stated that there's an international organization where kids get to grow through music and literacy. Louder Than a Bomb is a national youth poetry slam competition. Vanessa stated that the curriculum is used in Chicago Public Schools and in Chicago it's called Young Chicago Authors. Bryan stated that they'd be happy to discuss collaborating with the organization.
- Could there be a 1-year trial? Contracts are set for a minimum of one year. Some agencies will survey parents part way through the year to assess the value.
- The first couple of newsletters will be extremely important in that they will make our caregivers aware of the merger, noting this is what we're doing and why we're doing it.
- Will there be a way to include a disclaimer re: content ownership?
- Could we explore birth parent councils through the magazine? A: Absolutely.
- If we wanted to do something like North American Council on Adoptable Children's newsletter re: policy on a national level, is there any problem that we'd be referring to a national organization. A: There would be no problem at all. They already collaborate with NACAC and other organizations and networks.
- The magazine has an open submission policy. We are welcome to submit articles for consideration.
- Illinois Families Now & Forever is a ready reference for phone numbers and Illinois-specific resources and those should be shown in the front of the magazine.

Communications will continue to address the questions and follow up. The council will submit a letter of support for the collaboration between Illinois and Fostering Families Today.

Vanessa followed up with a conversation re: her upcoming transition. She is going to complete her DCFS contract to write the newsletter, then will transition to her new position in Communications at Feeding America. She is working with the Communications team to set the framework for merging the two publications just discussed. Vanessa noted that she has some very special projects currently underway and she will be working in both positions through August.

Approval of Minutes from 6/1/18 Meeting

Elizabeth Richmond

Alice Couch made the motion to approve the minutes. Anne O'Malley seconded, and the motion carried.

Councils Chairperson

Maggie Poteau

Maggie introduced Michelle Davis as the new Statewide Advisory Board Coordinator. Maggie is focusing now on Managed Care. Maggie is working on creating collaterals and focus group members will be contacted soon. She noted that there is a multi-tiered approval process, so it takes time to get things going.

Correction to Minutes from 04/06/2018 IAAC Meeting

The minutes were revised to list Julie Yelverton as seconding the motion to adjourn the meeting held on 04/06/2018. The date of the April minutes was also corrected. Danielle Sanders moved to accept the minutes as corrected with Michelle Price seconding the motion, and the motion carried.

QIC Update/Phone line/Web site Caring and Sharing Training

Christine Feldman and Vanessa James

Christine said that the grant is going strong. We're finishing outreach for the Target program. People will be trained to use T-4, a shorter version. Evaluation is the heart of the grant but supporting and messaging adoptive parents is critical. We've been supporting families through the phone line, the training video and the communication plan. Our collaboration will continue as Vanesa leaves the Department for her new job. The grant will pay Vanessa's salary as a consultant. Christine thanked the IAAC for their support. Vanessa stated that this project has been a great way to provide additional support for foster / adoptive parents and thanked Christine for providing a way for her to continue with the project through year four, the end of September.

The phone line has been going well. Julie Yelverton heard great feedback during a Central Region support group meeting. Someone mentioned how supportive and helpful the post-adoption worker was, and how surprised she was by that since it was a change from past experience. Staff has really embraced the system with calls coming in and tracking via SharePoint. Vanessa will work on an operations manual to provide additional direction. She will also tweak the outgoing message. We are approaching 300 calls that have been tracked. She also wants to do a customer service survey to assess callers experience with the number.

Christine talked at the previous meeting about carving out some funds to do a video training for families and that has quickly evolved. They've found a videographer, they've done pre-interviews with six families, they set up a framework for the video, and this video will use four scenarios that will touch on issues that come up that require therapeutic intervention. They'll

address relationships between siblings and other family members and the transition from adoption to adult guardianship and standby guardians. They will establish a two-week shooting schedule starting the week of August 6th. They will meet August 1st to flesh out the actual framework so that they will capture all the information they want to share. They will have a narrator that will connect what the family is experiencing with what's going on behind the scenes with the workers.

The web portal is moving forward. Vanesa has been curating content and others are working to assist. They don't yet have approval from DCFS to move forward with the technology unit. We have a new Chief Information Officer and they are setting up their criteria on how they will organize their projects. The hope is that this project will move forward quickly in order to conform with grant requirements and state mandates. The council will draft a letter of support.

Adoption Contracts and Services for FY 19

Sylvia Fonseca / Kelly King

We have a couple of new referrals for Baby Fold. There is still a waiting list. There are no real programmatic updates at this time. Sylvia said they're currently in discussion so there's nothing new to update the council on.

Discussion:

- Is there a Path Beyond Adoption business card that could be distributed? Vanessa stated that she developed a foster care recruitment card for Northern Region and it could possibly be tweaked for adoption, listing how to connect and whom to call.

Kelly noted that they are assessing their services and asked what kind of services council members feel are lacking in the post-adoption world.

- Provide support in navigating application for residential treatment. That could be care coordination through Adoption Preservation. The Center for Law and Social work is a good resource, but families need to know whom to call. The Center distributes a half-sheet of resource information. Kelly will discuss geographic coverage with Maria and Sylvia. The catchment area should show on page 19 in the new book. Services should be provided statewide.
- Higher mental health services for children and youth. Child care for those same children and use.
- Provide Care Coordination with relative providers and difficult adolescents with juvenile justice issues that spiral into returning to care.
- Expand (or publish) Educational Advocacy for youth post-adoption.

Elizabeth asked for business cards to cover these issues.

Motion: Mark Werner moved to adjourn the meeting; Danielle Sanders seconded and the motion for adjournment carried.

NEXT MEETING: Conference Call: Friday, September 7, 2018.

Items for the Next Agenda:

OITS talk about Web X

Managed Care

Approve Bylaws

Set Committee Goals

QIC Update – video

Newsletter / Magazine Update - Communications

Local Adoption Support and Preservation Programs (ASAP)

Adoption Program Update – Kelly, Sylvia

Binders / Member Orientation

Update from the Guardian - Janet Ahern